



### PROFESSION OVERVIEW

Pharmacists (Pharm.D.) are licensed healthcare professionals who ensure the safe and effective use of medications. They review prescriptions, check for drug interactions, counsel patients on proper medication use, and provide guidance on managing chronic conditions. They also offer preventive care services, such as administering immunizations and conducting health screenings.



### LENGTH OF PROGRAM (depending on specialty)

- **Medical School:** Four Years
- **Residency (optional):** One - Two Years
- **Fellowship (optional):** One - Two Years

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS/RECOMMENDATION

Most Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) programs have similar prerequisite coursework, which is outlined below. However, specific requirements may vary by school. Be sure to check each program's official website and refer to the PharmCAS School Directory (<https://www.pharmcas.org>) for the most up-to-date admissions criteria.

**\*It is the applicant's responsibility to verify all prerequisite courses, requirements, and application deadlines for each school they plan to apply to.**

One year of General Biology*	BIOL 101/BIOL 102 or BIOL 107/108
One year of General Chemistry	CHEM 201/CHEM 202
One year of Organic Chemistry	CHEM 311/312
One year of Physics	PHYS 101/102 or PHYS 105/106
One semester of Biochemistry	CHEM 317 or CHEM 414
One Semester of Microbiology	BIOL 314
One year English Composition	Gateway + a writing-intensive course

In addition to core science prerequisites, many Pharm.D. programs recommend or require coursework in mathematics (such as calculus and statistics), social and behavioral sciences (including psychology, sociology, or economics), and general education subjects such as English composition, communication, and humanities.

**\*ALL first year Biology students are required to complete Biol 101/102 instead of Biol 107/108**

### KEY COMPONENTS OF A COMPETITIVE PHARMACEUTICAL SCHOOL APPLICATION

Pharmacy schools seek well-rounded applicants with strong academic performance, relevant healthcare or pharmacy-related experience, and personal qualities that demonstrate readiness for a career in pharmacy. The following list outlines common criteria considered during the admissions process. For data on average GPA, prerequisite completion, and test requirements, refer to the PharmCAS School Directory at [www.pharmcas.org](https://www.pharmcas.org).

• GPA and science GPA	• Interview
• Extracurricular/community service	• Healthcare-related experiences
• Research experiences	• Personal statement
• Leadership experiences	• Letters of recommendation

### APPLICATION TIMELINE

Pharmacy school applicants should choose an application timeline that reflects their academic and professional readiness. Some students apply after completing three years of college coursework, while others complete a full bachelor's degree before applying. Students who start General Chemistry in their sophomore year often apply after graduation. This extended timeline can lead to improved academic performance, stronger prerequisite completion, and more pharmacy or healthcare experience.

Taking a year after graduation does not negatively impact admission. During this time, students can gain clinical experience, improve professional skills, and address any gaps in their academic or experiential background. Students should work with the Health and Science Career Counselor to create a plan that fits their goals.

For more information, visit [Make the Most of Your Gap Year](#).

## APPLICATION SERVICE

The Pharmacy College Application Service (PharmCAS) is the centralized application system used by most U.S. Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) programs. Applicants submit one primary application through PharmCAS, which is then distributed to participating schools. For more information, visit <https://www.pharmcas.org>.

Please note that some pharmacy schools do not participate in PharmCAS and may require a separate application. Be sure to check each school's website for specific instructions.

## STANDARDIZED TEST

Most Pharm.D. programs no longer require a standardized test for admission. The Pharmacy College Admission Test (PCAT), which was once commonly used, has been officially retired, with the final testing cycle held in January 2024. As a result, the majority of pharmacy schools no longer consider PCAT scores. A few programs may still accept previously taken PCAT scores or use other assessments such as CASPer, but these are rare. Admissions decisions now focus more heavily on academic performance, particularly in science and prerequisite courses, as well as pharmacy-related experience, personal statements, letters of recommendation, and interviews. Applicants should review each program's requirements through the PharmCAS School Directory or the individual school's website to ensure they meet all admissions criteria.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Pharmacists Association - Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP) [www.pharmacist.com/apha-asp](http://www.pharmacist.com/apha-asp)
- Student National Pharmaceutical Association (SNPhA) [www.snpha.org](http://www.snpha.org)
- American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) [www.aacp.org](http://www.aacp.org)
- Pharmacy College Application Service (PharmCAS) [www.pharmcas.org](https://www.pharmcas.org)
- Explore Health Careers - Pharmacy Section [www.explorehealthcareers.org](http://www.explorehealthcareers.org)
- Summer Health Professions Education Program (SHPEP) [www.shpep.org](http://www.shpep.org)
- Student Doctor Network [www.studentdoctor.net](http://www.studentdoctor.net)



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